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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: SENATOR KERRY'S MEETING WITH SUDANESE PRESIDENTIAL
ADVISOR SALAHEDDIN

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Alberto M. Fernandez for reasons 1.4(b)
) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: CODEL Kerry met with Government of Sudan
Presidential Advisor Dr. Ghazi Salaheddin at the Ministry of
Federal Rule on April 16, 2009. Congressman Kerry emphasized
that the U.S. Congress and the American people need to see an
immediate return to pre-ICC-arrest-warrant announcement
levels of humanitarian assistance and that the 2005
Comprehensive Peace Agreement must get back on track. Dr.
Salaheddin was reluctant to offer firm commitments on either
point, but expressed optimism that Sudan "could work with the
United States" and that an answer to the Senator's questions
would come soon. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Salaheddin began the meeting by thanking Senator Kerry
for his visit and praising the recent visit by U.S.
Presidential Special Envoy to Sudan General Scott Gration.
Senator Kerry replied in kind, and offered that he was in
Sudan to advance what General Gration began during his visit
earlier this month - a new approach for U.S.-Sudanese
relations. In particular, the United States needs two things
from Sudan: 1) a way to get back to 100% of the humanitarian
assistance capacity that was present before the March 4, 2009
International Criminal Court arrest warrant was announced for
Sudanese President Al-Bashir and 2) commitment from the
National Congress Party to participate in tri-partite talks
between the National Congress Party (NCP), the Sudan People's
Liberation Movement (SPLM), and the USG to continue
implementing the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

¶3. (C) In congratulating the U.S. Democratic party for
succeeding in winning the White House, Salaheddin opined that
"Sudan has been waiting since independence" to realize its
potential and sees President Obama's election as "the moment
change has come to the horizon" for Africa's largest country.
Claiming there was "a method" to the NCP's "madness," he
reported that the NCP needs to "grab this opportunity to help
Obama" and made a historical link to the "failure of the
leaders of the Iranian revolution in sinking the Carter
Administration and ushering in decades of anti-Iranian
leaders in Washington." Salaheddin offered that this was not
the time to dwell on past broken promises made by the U.S. to
Sudan, although their effect could not be ignored, but rather
a chance to look at the present and plan on the future
relations between the two countries.

¶4. (C) On the issue of returning to pre-March humanitarian
capacity, Salaheddin disagreed with Senator Kerry's
assessment that NGOs are operating at 60-70 percent of their
levels from six weeks ago. He stressed the need for the U.S.

and Sudan to agree on a joint assessment together, and also asserted that "if we are going to discuss humanitarian issues, we need to talk about bilateral issues, too." Salaheddin seemed to welcome the premise of tri-partite talks between the NCP, SPLM, and the USG on advancing the CPA, but openly worried that such discussions could be used to skewer the NCP in "the gallery" of public opinion and would not be constructive for restarting a stalled CPA. He claimed the NCP had "never used its mechanical majority" when making decisions in Sudan's National Assembly (where Ghazi is majority leader), but rather "always sought consensus" with the SPLM on important issues, and had "not passed any law without SPLM consent."

15. (C) Acknowledging difficulties between the CPA parties, Salaheddin mentioned that he recently had problems even reaching First Vice President Salva Kiir. He asked Senator Kerry for time to consult with others in his party on the humanitarian assistance and tri-partite talk issues but Sudan intended to be helpful on both. Echoing the Senator's sentiments that the U.S. wants "a means of stepping over old ways of doing things," Salaheddin urged the U.S. to "focus on the things that bind us," offering potential assistance on the issue of Somalia. When asked about Chad, Salaheddin replied that "the problem of Darfur cannot be solved without first answering the problem with Chad," but also noted that "Sudan and Chad can't fight each other forever."

16. (C) COMMENT: While cordial and optimistic, Salaheddin was noncommittal in responding directly to Senator Kerry's requests for deliverables on fully reconstituting humanitarian assistance in Darfur and moving implementation

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of the CPA forward. In meetings with VP Taha and NISS Director Ghosh later in the day (septel), the NCP continued to insist that humanitarian assistance in Darfur will be restored to 100% of what is required based on a joint assessment. They also agreed that a trilateral mechanism would be useful to advance CPA implementation, but expressed reservations about the neutrality of the U.S. and questioned whether the proposed mechanism would duplicate existing mechanisms such as the Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC). Ultimately, VP Taha agreed to the concept and Senator Kerry announced the agreement on a trilateral mechanism for CPA implementation at the press conference following the meeting. However, it remains to be seen whether the CPA parties will be keen to negotiate openly with the U.S. present, as both have their own reasons to obscure their intentions and avoid too much pressure. Both the SPLM and the NCP could likely see the value of such engagement over time, however, so we should continue to offer the tripartite mechanism as a way of breaking log-jams when needed. END COMMENT.
FERNANDEZ